

**Appl. No. 09/735,087
Amdt. dated October 13, 2004
Reply to Office action of July 13, 2004**

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

The specification has been amended to include the missing serial number and filing date information for the noted related applications.

Claims 13, 14, 28 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, due to insufficient antecedent basis for a portion of the claim language. Claim 13 and 28 have been cancelled, and claims 14 and 29 as well as their respective independent claims, 1 and 16 respectively have been amended to correct for the insufficient antecedent basis issue. As amended, claims 14 and 29 are believed to be in condition to overcome the noted rejection.

Claims 1-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended to further clarify the claim and as amended are believed to clearly claim statutory subject matter. Independent claim 1, as an example, has been amended to recite a "cryptographic system in a computer system" and further recites "a database, the database configured to contain sensitive information."

Claims 1-6, 9-21 and 24-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomlinson et al (U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,155). Claims 7-8 and 22-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomlinson et al in view of Matyas et al (U.S. Pat. No. 4,941,176). Applicants respectfully, traverse the rejection of claims 1-12, 14-27 and 29 in view of the cited references.

In the Office action it was stated in paragraph 6 that at Col. 13, lines 20-25 of the Thomlinson et al. reference it discloses "at least one master key is a most-secure master key and requiring a multi-part construction to be exposed." Applicants fail to find that teaching or suggestion. At col. 11, lines 38-39, it is stated that the master key (item 141, which is being equated to Applicants' most

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secure master key) is a random number. This is much different than "a most secure master key that requires a multi-part construction to be exposed." In one embodiment of Applicants' invention, this most secure master key comprises a protection key 24 requiring the knowledge of multiple passwords to be exposed.

Furthermore, there is no teaching in either of the cited references of the recited claim element "means for cryptographically linking one or more of the least one most-secure master key with one or more less-secure master keys such that any tampering of the one or more less-secure master keys can be detected." As claimed, this requires at least one most secure master key that requires multi-part construction to be exposed linked to a less-secure master key. Thomlinson et al. which is held to support this teaching in the Office action does not provide it. Even assuming arguendo that it would have been obvious to link the master key 141 with the item key 132 using a MAC as mentioned in the Office action, it would fail to render what is claimed obvious given that neither the master key 141 nor the item key 132 are a most-secure master key requiring a multi-part construction to be exposed. As mentioned previously, the master key 141 as specifically mentioned in Thomlinson is a random number, while the item key 132 as mentioned at col. 11, lines 27-29 "is generated as a random number by the default storage provider." As such, neither the master key 141 nor the item key 132 can be equated to the most-secure master key as recited in Applicants' claims. In one embodiment of the present invention, a protection key (most secure master key) which requires knowledge of multiple passwords and an integrity key (less secure master key) are linked together by for example Hashing the protection key, a salt, and the Integrity key (e.g., Hash(<Protection-key>|<Salt>|<Integrity Key>) to produce a hash value (see discussion at page 25, line 11-page 26, line 13). This linking of the protection key with the integrity key provides additional protection to the integrity key. Given this failure of the cited references to teach or suggest these claim limitation, claims 1-12, 14-27 and 29 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

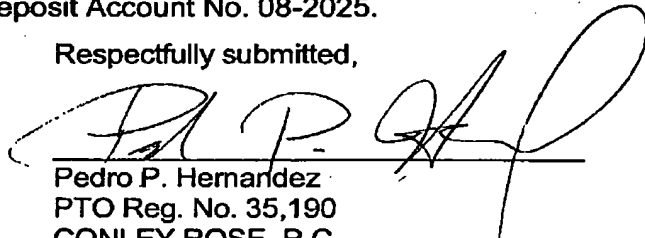
In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a

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particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the cited art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Hewlett-Packard Development Company's Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,



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